Lyman Copeland Draper, a memoir /

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LYMAN COPELAND DRAPER—A MEMOIR.1 BY THE EDITOR. R. G. Thwaites

1 Address delivered before the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, at its annual meeting, December 10, 1891.

On the night of the twenty-sixth of August, 1891, there passed from life one who was practically the architect of this Society, and for a third of a century its guiding spirit. In our capacity as an historical association, it has often been our duty to hold exorcises in memory of distinguished dead; but never were our funeral tributes more worthily bestowed than now, never was our line of duty nearer to heart.

Although we all greatly admired Lyman Copeland Draper, were aware of his work in the building of this institution, which to-day is his chiefest monument, had some knowledge of his national reputation as a collector and editor of historical materials and as an oracle in the history of trans-Alleghany pioneering, not many of us knew what sort of man was this tireless worker, what his methods were or his personal characteristics. Of so retiring a disposition was he, of so modest a demeanor, of so shrinking a habit, that it was given to but few, even of his literary associates, to understand the man as an individual. It was my lot to be as near to him, possibly, as was any other man; and if I can succeed in lifting for you the veil which seemed to obscure his personality, perhaps the study of his character may interest you as it has me.

Lyman C. Draper was born in the town of Hamburg (now Evans), Erie county, New York, on the fourth of September, 1815. Five generations back, his ancestors were Puritans in Roxbury, Massachusetts; his paternal grandfather was a Revolutionary soldier, and his maternal grandfather fell in the defense of Buffalo against the British in 1813, while his 1

2 father, Luke, was twice captured by the English during the same war. When Lyman was three years of age, the family removed to Lockport, on the Erie canal.

Luke Draper was by turns grocer, tavern-keeper and farmer, and as soon as his son Lyman could be of use about the house, the store or the land, he was obliged to do his full share of family labor. Up to the age of fifteen, the boy's experiences were those of the average village lad of the period— the almost continuous performance of miscellaneous duties, including family shoe repairing, the gathering and selling of wild berries and occasional jobs for the neighbors. One summer was spent in acting as a hod-carrier for a builder in the village, at the wage of twelve and one-half cents per day. From his fifteenth year to his eighteenth, he served as clerk in various village shops. During this time, after having gained all the education possible from the village school, he added to its meager curriculum the reading of what few books were obtainable by purchase or borrowing in the then frontier settlement, and established something of a local reputation as a youth of letters.

Even at that early age the lad's taste for Revolutionary lore was well developed. He came naturally by it. At Luke Draper's family fireside, the deeds of Revolutionary heroes always formed the chief topic of conversation. There were yet living many veterans of the Continental army, who were always welcome to the hospitality of the Draper household, while the war of 1812–15 was an event of but a few years previous. The boy was early steeped in knowledge of the facts and traditions of Anglo-American fights and western border forays, so that it was in after years impossible for him to remember when he first became inspired with the passion for obtaining information as to the events in which his ancestors took part.

As a boy he never neglected an opportunity to see and converse with distinguished pioneers and patriots. In 1825, when but ten years of age, he feasted his eyes upon La Fayette, during the latter's celebrated visit to the United 3 States; and to the last declared he had a vivid recollection of the lineaments of that noble friend of the Revolutionary

cause. Lewis Cass, De Witt Clinton, and other celebrities of that day, he also saw and heard at Lockport, while the presence in the village, on various occasions, of the noted Seneca chiefs, Tommy Jimmy, Major Henry O'Bail and others, were, to the young enthusiast in border-lore, like visitations from a realm of fancy. La Fayette was the subject of young Draper's first school composition, while his first article for the press, published in the Rochester *Gem* for April 6, 1833, was a sketch of Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, the last of the “signers.” One of the first historical works he ever read was Campbell's *Annals of Tyron County; or, Border Warfare of New York* , published in 1831. This and other publications of the time were replete with lurid accounts of border disturbances, well calculated to fire the imagination of youth.

Peter A. Remsen, a cotton factor at Mobile, Alabama, had married young Draper's cousin, and to Mobile went the enthusiastic historical student, now eighteen years of age staying with Remsen until May of the following year. While in Mobile, Draper chiefly occupied himself in collecting information regarding the career of the famous Creek chief, Weatherford, many of whose contemporaries lived in the neighborhood of the Alabama metropolis. These manuscript notes, laboriously written down fifty-eight years ago, are, like the greater portion of his materials for history, still mere unused literary bricks and stone.

In 1834, during his nineteenth year, Draper entered the college at Granville, Ohio, now styled Denison university. Here he remained as an undergraduate for over two years. He appears to have made a good record as a student, but was compelled from lack of money to leave the institution. Remsen had returned to New York from the south, and was now living in the neighborhood of Alexander, Genesee county. Draper's father was a poor man and unable either to help his son toward an education or to support him in idleness. Lyman was undersized, not robust, and had 4 tastes which seemed to fit him only for an unprofitable life of letters. Remsen offered the young man a congenial home, without cost, and to this patron he again went upon leaving Granville. For a time he was placed at

Hudson River seminary, in Stockport, his studies here being followed up with an extended course of private reading, chiefly historical.

Doddridge, Flint, Withers, and afterward Hall, were the early historians of the border, and the young student of their works found that on many essential points and in most minor incidents there were great discrepancies between them. It was in 1838, when twenty-three years of age, that Draper conceived the idea of writing a series of biographies of trans-Alleghany pioneers, in which he should be able by dint of original investigation to fill the gaps and correct the errors which so marred all books then extant upon this fertile specialty. This at once became his controlling thought, and he entered upon its execution with an enthusiasm which never lagged through a half century spent in the assiduous collection of material for what he always deemed the mission of his life; but unfortunately he only collected and investigated, and the biographies were never written.

From the Remsen home, Draper began an extensive and long-continued correspondence with prominent pioneers all along the border line—with Drs. Daniel Drake and S. P. Hildreth, and Colonel John McDonald, of Ohio; William C. Preston, of South Carolina; Colonel Richard M. Johnson, Charles S. Todd, Major Bland W. Ballard, Dr. John Croghan, and Joseph R. Underwood, of Kentucky; ex-Governor David Campbell, of Virginia, Colonel William Martin and Hugh L. White, of Tennessee, and scores of others of almost equal renown. Correspondence of this character, first with the pioneers and later with their descendants, he actively conducted till within a few days of his death.

In 1840 he commenced the work of supplementing his correspondence with personal interviews with pioneers, and the descendants of pioneers and Revolutionary soldiers, in their homes: because he found that for his purpose the 5 gaining of information through letters was slow and unsatisfactory, the mails being in those days tardy, unreliable and expensive, while many of those who possessed the rarest of the treasures sought were not adepts with the pen. There were no railroads then, and the eager collector of facts traveled on his great errand for many years, far and wide, by foot, by horseback, by stage,

by lumber wagon and by steamboat, his constant companion being a knapsack well-laden with note books.

In these journeys of discovery, largely through dense wildernesses, Draper traveled, in all, over sixty thousand miles, meeting with hundreds of curious incidents and hairbreadth escapes, by means of runaway horses, frightful storms, swollen streams, tipped-over stages, snagged steamboats, extremities of hunger, and the like, yet never once injured nor allowing any untoward circumstance to thwart the particular mission at the time in view. Many of those he sought, especially before 1850, were far removed from taverns and other conveniences of civilization; but pioneer hospitality was general and generous, and a stranger at the hearth a most welcome diversion to the dull routine of a frontiersman's household. The guest of the interviewed, the inquisitive stranger often stopped weeks together at those crude homes in the New York, Ohio, Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee backwoods—long enough to extract, with the acquired skill of a cross-examiner, every morsel of historical information, every item of valuable reminiscence stored in the mind of his host; while old diaries, or other family documents which might cast side-lights on the stirring and romantic story of western settlement, were deemed objects worth obtaining by means of the most astute diplomacy.

It would be wearisome to give a list of those whom Draper visited in the course of these remarkable wanderings which he made his chief occupation, with but few lapses, through nearly a quarter of a century, and continued at intervals for many years after. Only a few of the most notable can be mentioned. Perhaps the most important interview he ever had was with Major Bland Ballard, 6 of Kentucky, a noted Indian fighter under General George Rogers Clark in the latter's campaigns against the Ohio Indians. Other distinguished worthies who heaped their treasures at Draper's feet, were Major George M. Bedinger, a noted pioneer and Indian fighter, of Kentucky; General Benjamin Whiteman, of Ohio, and Captain James Ward, of Kentucky, two of Kenton's trusted lieutenants; and General William Hall, a general under Jackson in the Creek war, and afterward governor of Tennessee. Draper also interviewed fifteen of General Clark's old Indian campaigners, and

many of the associates and descendants of Boone, Kenton, Sumter, Sevier, Robertson, Pickens, Crawford, Shelby, Brady, Cleveland, and the Wetzels. He also visited and took notes among the aged survivors of several Indian tribes—the Senecas, Oneidas, Tuscaroras, Mohawks, Chickasaws, Catawbas, Wyandots, Shawanese, Delawares, and Pottawattomies. Not the least interesting of these were the venerable Tawanears, or Governor Blacksnake, one of the Seneca war captains at Wyoming, who served as such with the famous Mohawk chief, Joseph Brant, and the scholarly Governor William Walker, of the Wyandots. The descendants of Brant among the Canada Mohawks, whom Draper interviewed at much length, gave him an Indian name signifying “The Inquirer.” Draper once visited Andrew Jackson, at the home of the latter, and had a long conversation with the hero of New Orleans. At another time he was the guest of Colonel Richard M. Johnson, who is thought to have killed Tecumseh, and, as I have said before, frequently corresponded with him. He once saw Henry Clay, when in Kentucky on one of his hunts for manuscripts, and General Harrison, in Ohio, but had no opportunity to speak to either of them.

The period of Draper's greatest activity in the direction of personal interviews was between 1810 and 1879, but upon occasion he frequently resorted to that method of obtaining materials for history in his later years; while the period of his active correspondence in that direction was ended only by his death. The result of this half century of rare toil and drudgery was a rich harvest of collections. Upon the 7 shelves of his large private library, now the property of this Society, were, besides a still greater mass of loose papers, a hundred and fifty portly volumes of manuscripts, the greater part made up of wholly original matter, nearly all of it as yet unpublished, covering the entire history of the fight for the Northwest, from 1742, the date of the first skirmish with the Indians in the Virginia valley, to 1813–14, when Tecumseh was killed and the Creeks were defeated.1

1 He himself computed, in 1857, that his material comprised “some 10,000 foolscap pages of notes of the recollections of warrior-pioneers, either written by themselves, or taken down from their own lips; and well-nigh 5,000 pages more of original manuscript journals,

memorandum books, and old letters written by nearly all the leading border heroes of the West."

A few only of these unique documents can be noted in the time allotted me. The earliest manuscripts in the Draper collection are some documents concerning McDowell's fight in the Virginia valley, in 1742, just mentioned. There is also George Rogers Clark's original manuscript narrative of his famous expedition to Kaskaskia and Vincennes in 1778, a volume of some two hundred and twenty-five pages. The earliest original manuscript diary in the collection is one kept by Captain William Preston, who commanded a company under Lewis during the Sandy Creek expedition in West Virginia, in 1756. There are several diaries on the Point Pleasant campaign in West Virginia in 1774. Numerous diaries relate to Kentucky—one of them kept by George Rogers Clark in 1776, and another by Colonel William Fleming during an early trip to the "dark and bloody ground." Some diaries on St. Clair's and Wayne's campaigns are of especial interest. But the foregoing are merely sample treasures. As the old frontier heroes were not noted for keeping diaries, the great number and remarkable character of the rich material among the Draper manuscripts strongly illustrate to all those who have essayed collections of this sort, his arduous labors of a life-time.

In 1841, while in the midst of his chosen task, Draper 8 drifted to Pontotoc, in northern Mississippi, where he became part owner and editor of a small weekly journal entitled, *Spirit of the Times* .1 The paper was not a financial success, and at the close of a year his partner bought him out, giving in payment the deed to a tract of wild land in the neighborhood. There came to Pontotoc, about this time, a young lawyer named Charles H. Larrabee, afterward a prominent citizen of Wisconsin, where he became a circuit judge and a congressman. Larrabee had been a student with Draper at Granville. The professional outlook at Pontotoc not being rich with promise, Larrabee united his fortunes with those of his college-mate and together they moved upon Draper's tract. For about a year the young men "roughed it" in a floorless, windowless hut, a dozen miles from Pontotoc, the nearest post-office, raising sweet potatoes and living upon fare of the

crudest character. In the summer of 1842 Draper received the offer of a clerkship under a relative who was Erie canal superintendent at Buffalo, and retraced his steps to the north, leaving Larrabee in sole possession. But the latter soon had a call to Chicago and followed his friend's example, leaving their crop of sweet potatoes ungarnered and their land to the mercy of the first squatter who chanted along.

1 " *Spirit of the Times*—devoted to news, agriculture, commercial and literary intelligence." The prospectus for the venture, signed, "Leland and Draper," was dated May 8, 1841. The one copy of the little journal found among Dr. Draper's effects is dated September 18, 1841.

The following year, however, Draper was back again in Pontotoc, where he made some interesting "finds" in the chests of the Mississippi pioneers. In 1844 he returned to Remsen's household, then near Baltimore.2 After a time the family moved to Philadelphia, whither he accompanied them. For eight years thereafter Mr. Draper's principal occupation was the prosecution of his search for historical data, always collecting and seldom writing up any of his

2 He left Pontotoc in December, 1843. Journeying leisurely northward, visiting pioneers on the way, he called in March on Andrew Jackson, at the Hermitage. In a letter to *The Perry* (N. Y.) *Democrat*, dated Nashville, Tenn., March 16, 1844, he describes his visit and relates his conversation with the ex-president. See *ante*, p. 79.

9 material, for he was not willing to commence until he had, to his own satisfaction, exhausted every possibility of finding more. If the truth must be told, our collector had already become so imbued with the zeal of collecting that he had come to look upon the digestion of his material as of secondary consideration.

During this life in Philadelphia, he added miscellaneous Americana to the objects of his collection, and particularly old newspaper files, for he found that these latter were among the most valuable sources of contemporaneous information on any given topic in history.

Library of Congress

He thus collected a unique library at the Remsen home, which came to attract almost as much attention among scholars as had his manuscript possessions. It was a time when there were few historical students or writers in America engaged in original research; as a specialist in the trans-Alleghany field, Draper practically stood alone. George Bancroft, Hildreth, S. G. Drake, Parkham, Sparks, Lossing and others, displayed much interest in the Draper collections, which several of them personally examined and publicly praised. They sent him encouraging letters, urging him to enter upon his proposed task of writing up the heroes of the border.

In 1854, Lossing went so far as to enter upon a literary copartnership with Draper for the joint production of a series of border biographies: Boone, Clark, Sevier, Robertson, Brady, Kenton, Martin, Crawford, Whitley, the Wetzels, Harmar, St. Clair, Wayne and others being selected. The titles of the several biographies were agreed upon at a meeting in Madison between Lossing and Draper; but while as a collector Draper was ever in the field, eager, enterprising and shrewd, as a writer he was a procrastinator, and nothing was done at the time. In 1857, he displayed renewed interest in the scheme, and sent broadcast over the country a circular informing the public that the long-promised work was at last to be performed, and yet nothing came of it.

Nineteen years had now elapsed since Draper had entered fully upon his career as a collector. He had, up to that 10 time, made a collection of material perhaps nearly as valuable in all essential points as it was at his death. His accumulations in after years were more in the direction of details, and much of this class of matter, in the getting of which he spent the last thirty-five years of his life, would doubtless be considered as unimportant by most historical writers imbued with the modern philosophizing spirit. Draper, however, considered no detail regarding his heroes as too trivial for collection and preservation. His design was to be encyclopædic; he would have his biographies embrace every scrap of attainable information, regardless of its relative merit. He has confessed to me, with some sadness, more than once, that he felt himself quite lacking in the sense of proportion, could not understand the principles of historical perspective or historical philosophy, and

as for generalization he abhorred it. Yet his literary style was incisive, and he sometimes shone in controversy.

“I have wasted my life in puttering,” he once lamented, “but I see no help for it; I can write nothing so long as I fear there is a fact, no matter how small, as yet ungarnered.” It was as if he were a newspaper editor, fearing to put his journal to press because something else might happen when too late to insert it in that day's issue. Draper not only feared to go to press, but even refrained from writing up his notes, literally from an apprehension that the next mail might bring information which would necessitate a recasting of his matter. At the time of his contract with Lossing, he had completed some twenty chapters of his proposed *Life of Boone* —perhaps a half of the number contemplated. It is likely that this manuscript was written before he came to Madison; it seems certain, from its present appearance, that he added nothing to it during the succeeding thirty-four years of his life. Of his other projected biographies, I cannot find that he had written more than a few scattering skeleton chapters.

On the 29th of January, 1849, the State Historical Society of Wisconsin had been organized at Madison. It had at first but a sickly existence, for there was no person at its service with the technical skill necessary to the advancement 11 of an undertaking of this character. Larrabee, Draper's old college mate, had drifted to Wisconsin, and was now a circuit judge. He was one of the founders of the Society. In full knowledge of the quality of his friend's labors, he urged upon his associates the importance of attracting such a specialist to Madison. Harlow S. Orton, today an associate justice of the Wisconsin supreme court, together with Governor Farwell and others, heartily cooperated with Judge Larrabee, and about the middle of October, 1852, Draper arrived in Madison. His patron Remsen had died the spring before, and the following year Draper married the widow, who was also his cousin.1 The historian was then thirty-seven years of age, full of vigor and push, kindly of disposition, persuasive in argument, devoted to his life-task of collecting, self-denying in the cause, and of unimpeachable character.

1 On the 23d of May, 1888, Draper lost this his first wife, whose last years were those of a chronic invalid, a fact which did much to hamper him in his literary work. On the 10th of October, 1889, at Cheyenne, Wyo., he married Mrs. Catherine T. Hoyt, of that place, and she survives him.

For various reasons, it was the 18th of January, 1854, before the Society was thoroughly reorganized, and Draper, as corresponding secretary, made its executive officer. Then for the first time the institution began to move. The new secretary entered with joyous enthusiasm upon the undertaking of accumulating books for the library, relics and curiosities for the museum, portraits of pioneers for the gallery, and documents for publication in the *Wisconsin Historical Collections* . His administration opened with a library of but fifty volumes contained in a small case with glass doors that is to-day exhibited in our museum as a suggestive relic. The Society's library has now grown to nearly one hundred thousand priceless volumes, and rich stores of pamphlets and manuscripts; its museum and art gallery annually attract over thirty-five thousand visitors; its possessions are probably marketable at nearly a million dollars, and in usefulness to the people of this state are beyond price.

The story of the Society's remarkable progress is doubtless 12 familiar to you all. By the close of the first year of his management, Secretary Draper had accumulated for the library a thousand books and a thousand pamphlets. In August, 1855; the Society—its treasures having heretofore been shown in the office of the secretary of state—moved into quarters in the basement of the Baptist church, still standing on Carroll street. On the first of January following, Daniel S. Durrie was chosen librarian, and still holds the position after thirty-six years of efficient service; as the secretary's lieutenant throughout this long period, we must not forget that to him, too, belongs no small measure of praise in any record of our institution. In January, 1866, having outgrown its old quarters in the church, the Society—now with its museum and art gallery as well as library—was given rooms in the then new south wing of the capitol. In December, 1884, again pressed for space, we

moved into the present south transverse wing, where we occupy three of the spacious floors; and the time is not far distant when our growing needs will necessitate another removal—then, we trust, into our own fire proof building.

During the years 1858 and 1859, Secretary Draper served as state superintendent of public instruction. He was quite as efficient in this role as in that of antiquarian collector. He was the originator of a bill establishing township libraries, and almost unaided secured its passage by the legislature in 1859. The people of the state raised in the first year of the Draper law a library fund of $88,784.78 to be expended for the several towns by a state library board; but in 1861, when the civil war broke out, and the resources of the commonwealth were taxed to the utmost to support its troops at the front, the well-digested library law was repealed and the money already accumulated transferred to other funds before a book could be purchased or the proposed board organized. It was not until 1887—twenty-eight years after—that an act was again passed by the Wisconsin legislature, establishing township libraries for the education of rural communities.

It may truly be said of State Superintendent Draper that 13 he was the first occupant of the office to take a broad grasp of its duties and responsibilities. He won enthusiastic encomiums from Governor Randall, legislative committees, prominent educators in different portions of the country, and at various times in the annual reports of his appreciative successors in office, who came to realize, as they in turn examined the records of the department, what a complete and healthy revolution he had brought about in its management.

While serving as state superintendent, he was *ex-officio* a member of the boards of regents of the University of Wisconsin and the state normal schools, respectively. He was particularly efficient in promoting the interests of the former, and, recognizing that “the true university of these days is a collection of books,” devoted his energies to the founding of an adequate library for that institution. This service, as well as his life labors in promoting the cause of historical literature, was formally recognized by the state university in 1871,

by the conferring upon him the degree of LL. D.—Granville having made him an M. A. just twenty years previous.

So indefatigable was Dr. Draper in his labors for the advancement of popular education, that there seemed good cause for fearing that he was for the time neglecting his especial task as a collector and editor of materials for Western history, and that he might permanently be diverted from it. For this reason, a number of distinguished educators and historical students in various parts of the country sent him frequent letters protesting against his continuance in the new field at the expense of the old.

Dr. Draper finally heeded these urgent calls for a return to his proper sphere of duty; and the year 1860 found him back at his work in behalf of the State Historical Society, and in the prosecution thereof he never again lagged so long as he remained its corresponding secretary.

In 1869, we rather oddly find Dr. Draper preparing and publishing, in partnership with W. A. Croffut, a well-known writer, a book of 800 pages entitled, *The Helping* 14 *Hand: An American Home Book for Town and Country* . It was a compilation, culled from newspapers and magazines, of suggestions and recipes appertaining to stock and fruit raising, domestic economy, agricultural economics, cookery, household medical remedies, etc.—a singular digression for an historical specialist. The publication came eventually into the toils of a law-suit, and the authors never realized anything from their labors. It was Dr. Draper's first book.

His next work was *King's Mountain and its Heroes* , an octavo volume of 612 pages, published in 1881 by Peter G. Thomson, of Cincinnati. Unfortunately for the publisher and author, the greater part of the edition was consumed by fire soon after its issue, so that few copies are now extant; although the stereotype plates are in existence. Aside from the border forays of whites and Indians, the really romantic portion of the history of the Revolution in the south is confined to the whig and tory warfare of the Carolinas, which

was first fully treated in *King's Mountain* . The book was well received at the time; but in later years Winsor and others have criticised it as possessing the faults which have ever been conspicuous in Dr. Draper's treatment of his material: a desire to be encyclopædic, and a lack of proper historical perspective. But even with these faults, *King's Mountain* is, as a bulky storehouse of information obtained at first hand, regarding the Revolutionary war in the south, a permanently valuable contribution to American historical literature.

Tucked away in a volume of odds and ends upon our library shelves is a pamphlet of fifty pages, by Dr. Draper, entitled, *Madison, the Capital of Wisconsin: Its Growth, Progress, Condition, Wants and Capabilities* . It was our secretary's contribution in 1857 to the well-known “Farwell boom.” No advertising pamphlet issued by Madison “boomers” since that day has been so comprehensive in details of statistics and description, or more gracefully written. It was in wide circulation throughout the country, thirty-four years ago, and thousands now living obtained 15 from its pages their first knowledge of Wisconsin's capital and the Four Lake region; yet to-day it is a literary rarity.

Dr. Draper rode many hobbies in his day. One of them was the collection of autographs of notable people, both for himself and for the Society. In 1887 appeared his *Essay on the Autographic Collections of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence and of the Constitution* (New York; pp. 117). In the preparation of this monograph, which first appeared in Vol. X. of the *Wisconsin Historical Collections* , he expended remarkable patience and industry, and the result is a treatise so exhaustive that probably none other will care to enter the field with him.

The following year (Cincinnati, 1888), he appeared as editor of Forman's *Narrative of a Journey down the Ohio and Mississippi in 1789–90* . In this pamphlet of sixty-seven pages, he did much good work, bringing to bear upon the subject a quantity of illustrative material garnered from his own stores. This was Dr. Draper's last appearance in the book-market.

I have spoken of the progress he had made upon his long-projected *Life of Boone* , and the few scattering chapters on other border heroes. He had also completed the manuscript for a volume on the so-called Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence of May, 1775—a painstaking and most exhaustive monograph it certainly would have been, if finished. For some time he was engaged with Consul W. Butterfield, now of Omaha, in the preparation of a work to be entitled, *Border Forays and Adventures* ; the manuscript appears to have been completed, but was never published. His last weeks of work were spent in preparing notes for a proposed republication by Robert Clarke & Co., Cincinnati, of Withers's *Chronicles of Border Warfare* (Clarksburg, Va., 1831); he had annotated about one-third of the volume, and prepared a preface and memoir. He frequently contributed biographical articles to encyclopædias; some of the sketches of noted border heroes in Appleton's *Cyclopædia of American Biography* are from his pen.

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Perhaps one of the greatest difficulties under which Dr. Draper labored was that in his desire to inform the public he attempted too much. The variety of plans for historical works which for the last forty years of his life he had in various stages of preparation is quite astonishing. Instead of completing these enterprises one at a time, he continually added to them all, never pausing in his zealous search for fresh details, ever hesitating in an excess of conscientious caution to construct his proposed edifices, for fear that there might yet be found new arid better quarries.

Despite his ambition to work in a broader field. Dr. Draper's chief work as an historian was the editing and publication of the *Wisconsin Historical Collections* . Ten large octavo volumes of 500 pages each were issued under his editorship. These constitute a vast mass of original material bearing upon the history of the state, particularly the pre-territorial epoch: all of it gathered by Dr. Draper, either through personal solicitation of manuscripts from prominent early pioneers, or by means of interviews with old-time celebrities, white and red, by the doctor himself. In the garnering of these materials for the early history

of Wisconsin, the busy corresponding secretary traveled thousands of miles, wrote thousands of letters, and interviewed hundreds of individuals. Each paper in the ten volumes was carefully edited and annotated by this untiring worker, who brought to bear upon every important point a wealth of correlative illustration or needed correction. These volumes, a storehouse of original data bearing upon the history of our state. are enough of themselves fully to establish his reputation as an historical specialist. Their incalculable value to western historians has been frequently attested by the best of authority—Bancroft, Sparks, Parkman, Shea, Lossing, and others of lesser note, having frequently complimented Dr. Draper upon their excellence and practical importance, and emphasized the debt which students of American history will always owe to him for them.

Recognizing that his physical vigor was waning, yet as ambitious to complete his greater works as in his earlier

LYMAN C. DRAPER. From Painting by James R. Stuart, in Gallery of State Historical Society of Winconsin.

17 years, and quite as confident that he would succeed in the task, Dr. Draper retired from the service of the Society at the close of the year 1886. Unfortunately for himself, he had accumulated so vast a flood of material that at last it, was beyond his control, and although ever hopeful of soon commencing in earnest, he could but contemplate his work with awe. He thenceforth made no important progress.

“Still puttering,” he often mournfully replied, when I would inquire as to what he was doing; but his countenance would at once lighten as he cheerfully continued, “Well, I'm really going to commence on George Rogers Clark in a few days, as soon as I hear from the letters I sent to Kentucky this morning; but I am yet in doubt whether I ought to have a Boston or a New York publisher: what is your judgment?” It was ever the same story—always planning, never doing. For this Society he was one of the most practical of men, and his persistent energy was rewarded by almost phenomenal success: but our work was pressing; in his own enterprises he could wait—till at last he waited too long.

On the 15th of August, 1891, the doctor suffered a paralytic stroke, which was the beginning of the end. Nevertheless, when partially recovered, he bravely returned to his desk, still confident that his projected series of a dozen huge biographies would yet leap from his pen when he was at last ready. So, full of hope, though physically feeble. he toiled on until again paralysis laid him low, and on the 26th of August he passed quietly to the hereafter, his great ambition unattained, his Carcasonne unreached. Death had rung down the curtain on this tragedy of a life's desire.

Short and slight of stature, Dr. Draper was a bundle of nervous activity. Almost to the last, his seventy-six years sat easily on his shoulders. Light and rapid of step, he was as agile as many a youth, despite the fact that he was seldom in perfect health. His delicately-cut features, which exhibited great firmness of character and the powers of intense mental concentration, readily brightened 2 18 with the most winning of smiles. By nature and by habit he was a recluse. His existence had been largely passed among his books and manuscripts, and he cared nothing for those social alliances and gatherings which delight the average man. Long abstention from general intercourse with men with whom he had no business to transact made him shy of forming acquaintances, and wrongly gained for him a reputation of being unapproachable. To him who had a legitimate errand thither, the latch-string of the fireproof library and working “den”—which was hidden in a dense tangle of lilacs and crab trees in the rear of the bibliophile's residence—was always out, and the literary hermit was found to be a most amiable gentleman and a charming and often merry conversationist; for few kept better informed on current events, or had at command a richer fund of entertaining reminiscences. To know Dr. Draper was to admire him as a man of generous impulses, who wore his heart upon his sleeve, was the soul of purity and honor, did not understand what duplicity meant, and was sympathetic to a fault.

Weighing his own words carefully and, as becoming an historical student, abhorring exaggeration, it is not fitting that what we say here of his life and work should be mere eulogy. Were he here in spirit and could speak, his words would be, “Tell the truth if you

tell anything." Firm in the belief that such would be his will, I have with loving freedom talked to you of Dr. Draper as those found him who knew him best.

If not a great man, he was to his generation an eminently useful one. He was perhaps the most successful of all collectors of material for American border history; and it will ever be a source of great regret to historical students that his unfortunate temperament as a writer, combined with the burden of his duties in behalf of this Society, prevented him from giving to the world that important series of biographies for which he so eagerly planned over half a century ago. He has generously left to us his materials—so much bricks and stone, ready for some aspiring architect of the future; these will be of incalculable value to 19 original workers in many branches of western history, yet it would have been far better if Dr. Draper, who best knew the relative value of the papers he had so laboriously collected, could have himself interpreted his manuscripts.

But even had Dr. Draper never been a collector of border lore, never entertained ambitions in a broader field, his work for this Society has of itself been sufficient to earn for him the lasting gratitude of the people of Wisconsin, and of all American historical students. The Society's library, which he practically founded and so successfully managed and purveyed for through a third of a century—and even fought for in many a day when its future looked dark indeed—will remain an enduring monument to his tireless energy as a collector of Americana; while the first ten volumes of *Wisconsin Historical Collections* attest to his quality as an editor of material for western history. Thus measured, his life was successful in a high degree; and now that this gentle scholar, of noble purpose, of wondrous zeal and self-denial in our cause, has at last laid down his weighty burden, and is with us in the flesh no more, we can say with one accord that the name of Lyman Copeland Draper shall ever be foremost in the annals of this Society.

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Dr. Draper wrote many newspaper articles, signed and unsigned, on historical, literary and political subjects. He was the author also of numerous addresses, appeals and leaflets, in the line of his work as a collector and as secretary of this Society. It is unnecessary fully to enumerate such ephemeral matter in the following list, although there are included therein a few items of this class, having some biographical interest.

In the matter of his unpublished works, the two only are noted which apparently were finished ready for the printer. As mentioned in the memoir (*ante* , p. 15), his re-editing of Withers's *Chronicles of Border Warfare* was perhaps one-third done; the *Life of Boone* had possibly (*ante* , p. 10) been half finished; and upon others of his contemplated works he had made some progress, although for the most part meagre and tentative.

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